

## **2.4.2. Relative Rank of HIV/AIDS Deaths**

The Tennessee Department of Health, Division of Information Resources in the Center for Health Statistics, provided mortality data used to rank HIV/AIDS deaths among the leading causes of death by age, sex and race in Tennessee. These data are used to determine the relative importance of HIV/AIDS as a cause of death for various population groups across the State. Data at the level of ICD-9 code 042 - HIV infection -were not able to be derived. Hence, the ICD-9 diagnostic category, Infectious and Parasitic Diseases, was used as a proxy.

Table 2.4.1 shows the relative ranking of the seven leading causes of death for Tennessee residents by age, sex and race for 1994, the year for which the most recent mortality data were available. HIV/AIDS as a cause of death (ICD-9 codes 042, 043, 044) was not separated out but would be included in the ICD-9 Infectious and Parasitic Diseases category. This table indicates the impact of HIV/AIDS as a cause of death relative to the other leading causes.

The preceding findings are consistent with unpublished data from the Tennessee Department of Health which state that HIV/AIDS was the second leading cause of death for Tennessee residents in the 25-34 year age-group (all race and sex categories grouped together). While the relative rankings of HIV/AIDS as a cause of death for black males, black females, and white males were quite similar, infectious diseases accounted for a greater percentage of deaths among the 25-to-34 year age-group for both black males and black females than for white males or white females.

Infectious diseases were the leading cause of death for black females aged 25-34 years and accounted for 23% of their deaths. Deaths from HIV infection and AIDS complications represented the vast majority of these cases. For white males aged 25-34 years, infectious diseases ranked second only to motor vehicle accidents as a cause of death. Infectious diseases accounted for 17% of their deaths. They ranked second as a cause of death for black males ages 25-34, accounting for 26% of deaths. Infectious diseases ranked fifth as a cause of death, tied with other accidents, for white females in this age-group, and accounted for 6% of their deaths.

When looking at the 35-44 age-group, infectious diseases diminished in rank as a cause of death in all but the black male category. In that instance, they ranked second after heart disease. Infectious diseases dropped to third place ranking for white males and to fifth place ranking (tied with motor vehicle accidents) for black females. Infectious diseases were not one of the seven leading causes of death for white females in this age-group.

The final age-group (45-54 years of age) reflects further the diminished importance of infectious diseases as a leading cause of death with increasing age in all but one race/sex category, namely black males. These diseases ranked third as a